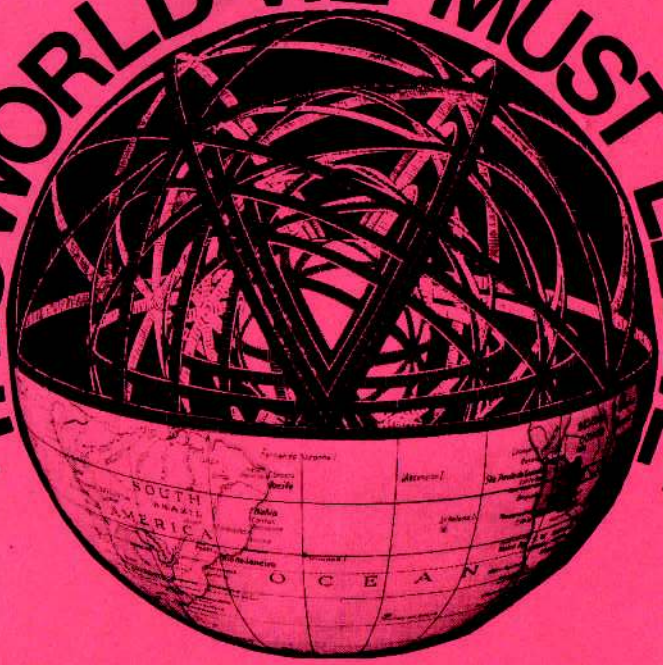
THIS WORLD WE MUST LEAVE.



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THIS WORLD WE MUST LEAVE

In order to locate the perspective outlined in *'Against Domestication'* and to delimit the world we have to leave, we have to state clearly now how its determinant, the development of the capitalist mode of production (CMP), appears. What is meant by the crisis of the CMP? How is the development-break with the CMP posed? These are questions that have to be answered. I shall only deal with some points in brief and certainly insufficiently, but necessarily so because that allows us to give a greater coherence than was previously published in this review. This also allows the location of 'supercession' of Marx as was envisaged by several comrades writing in *'Invariance'* as well as those who have not been published there, but are on a convergent path. More especially since many do not even condescend to make an absent-minded glance in Marx's direction after they have stated that he is surpassed. But, for me, it is not a question of the death of Marx, but of my life where Marx is always essential. It is not a question of superceding Marx in order to assert oneself, but in order to be in line with the dynamic of human life which is tending to disengage itself from the empire of capital. I say that in thinking of Adorno's remark in *'Minima Moralia'* on artists. All artists must at heart kill their predecessor in order to assert themselves, i.e. one must abandon the practice of killing a mythical father.

Autonomisation and the runaway of capital

What was published in *'Capital'* and even the *'Grundrisse'* shows that Marx trips over interest bearing capital and over the possibility of placing it in the totality. How can we explain the development towards totality by the mediation of interest bearing capital and simultaneously explain the global reproduction based on *'Capital'* Volume II? It is important to locate the point Marx trips over so that we can better understand capital's runaway. Likewise, the relative 'independence' of the study of land rent in relation to the rest of the work also signifies the impossibility for Marx to conceive of capital in its entire development. I raised this question in talking of the 'Terrestrialisation' of capital's laws, so asserting that capital can be better explained on the basis of the theory of land rent than on the basis of the laws explained in volumes II and III (everything about production price, equalisation of the rate of profit, tendency for the rate of profit to fall). Marx, following Ricardo, was a marginalist but not from the aspect of the individual subject, but from the aspect of the social subject, because the marginality depends not on individual man, but on social and global demand. But then with Marx demand is not an extra-economic thing, as one often tended to consider it, but an operating economic element. There is something there resembling the problem of use value and it is correct that the two questions are linked, (e.g. *'Capital'* II, Moscow 1956, p.147:

> "With the development of capitalist production, the scale of production is determined less and less by the direct demand for the product and more and more by the amount of capital available in the hands of the individual capitalist, . . .")

In fact Marx asked the question of knowing to what extent use value is a

purely economic phenomenon, (cf. *'Grundrisse'*).

The presuppositions for the autonomisation of the form are:

1. Autonomisation of the different products of capital—profit, interest and land rent. From this there is a movement of the forms of surplus value and the question that poses itself is how to know how to link the different autonomised movements which are self-autonomising so that it should not end up in the disaggregation of the totality.

2. The loss of substance, i.e. the quantum of labour in each commodity capital tends to fall continuously (devalorisation). Hence the contradiction between valorisation and devalorisation which we have frequently analysed.

3. Disappearance of exchange which has to be related to the generalisation of wage labour and the fact that workers are paid as other professional categories.

4. The fact that capital is circulating capital which must always dominate circulation to continue existence.

We have already treated this question partially in the following manner:

(a) autonomisation of capital on the basis of its own presuppositions, i.e. created by it.

(b) it surmounts the difficulties in (1) above through the development of fictitious capital (even for the question valorisation/devalorisation). Fictitious capital is partly considered as the connective tissue joining the different capitals.

(c) the total development of capital as a finished structure and, better still, material community, allows it to escape this fiction because this is accompanied by the phenomenon of anthropomorphosis.

I was led to introduce this concept of anthropomorphosis after reading Marx's *'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Law"'*. In my 1962-3 commentaries for a study of democracy (this was sent to Bordiga in 1964, cf. *'Invariance'* Series I, no.1, postface of 1974), I noted the following:

> "Concerning the entailment of estates in primogeniture two elements need stressing:
>
> 1) That which is enduring is the *ancestral estate*, the *landed property*. It is the lasting element in the relationship, the *substance*. The master of the entailed estate, the owner, is really a mere *accident*. The different generations represent *anthropomorphised* landed property. *Landed property*, as it were, continually inherits the first born of the House as the attribute fettered to it. Every first-born in the series of landed proprietors is the *inheritance*, the *property* of the *inalienable estate*, the *predestined substance of its will* and its *activity*. The subject is the thing and the predicate the human being. The will becomes the property of the property.
>
> (2) The *political quality* of the owner of the entailed estate is the *political quality* of his ancestral estate, a *political quality* inherent in this estate. Hence the political quality also appears here as the *property* of *landed property*, as a quality which directly belongs to the *purely physical* earth (nature)." (Marx/Engels *'Collected Works'* Vol.III, Moscow 1975, p.106)
>
> "The same thing occurs in capitalist society, only this time it is

related to capital. The only difference is that capital abstracts man, i.e. it takes all his content, all his material nature; labour power, all human substance is capital. Starting from this, capital performs anthropomorphosis. It also does so in its links with civil society, the collection of humans, since it needs individuals to perform its dictatorship. These are the bureaucrats, the technocrats etc. Man is abstract man defined by the constitution. Moreover, one should not forget capital has conquered all science, all human intellectual work, and it dominates the very name of this amassed knowledge. In opposition to the man of feudal society, which was animal above all, man of bourgeois society is a pure spirit."

In Series I number 2, *'The unpublished "Sixth Chapter" of "Capital" and Marx's Economic Work'* as well as in the theses on capital in Series I number 6, I treated this question of the autonomisation of capital and also in later works, while Series II number 3(a) contained only the statements on the runaway of capital. It is therefore best to take a step back to recentre this question and to exhaust it as far as possible.

We saw in Volume I (of *'Capital'*) that Marx defined capital as value in process and in Volume II he deals with capital-value (especially pp.108-9). In Volume III and the *'Grundrisse'* he defined capital as the unity of the production and circulation processes (cf. *'Theories of Surplus Value'* III, p.492), that capital is this unity in process; finally he states that capital is capital in process. It is important to situate each moment of these essential determinations. More, one must have in mind that for Marx each moment of capital becomes more or less autonomised capital, that there can be a contradiction between individual and global capital. On the other hand, the movement of capital is presented as being the exteriorisation of its internal relation, value, support of advanced capital, and surplus value (cf. also to a certain extent the relation between necessary and surplus labour, but also fixed and circulating capital).

Some remarks to show this best:

"It is extremely important to grasp [*fassen*] these aspects of circulating and fixated capital as specific characteristic forms of capital generally . . ." (*'Grundrisse'*, Harmondsworth 1973. Here and later German words will be added to explain some phrases; also the translation will be altered where it is defective. -Translator)

The whole of this passage is also the explanation of the particular moment of the total process of capital valorisation which includes the phase of devalorisation, thus the total process of capital = unity of production and circulation, can be analysed as being simultaneously valorisation and devalorisation, how capital surmounts this contradiction if not by exteriorisation of it in a movement which posits fictitious capital, which thus tends to negate itself in an immediate manner to avoid objectifying itself (to avoid objectification), because that is alienation, thus devalorisation, all objectification is negation, i.e. devalorisation:

"As the subject predominant [*übergreifend*] over the different phases of this movement, as value sustaining and multiplying itself in it, as the subject of these metamorphoses proceeding in a circular course [*Zirkellauf*]—as a spiral, as an expanding circle—capital is *circulating capital*. Circulating capital is therefore initially not a *particular*

form of capital, but rather *capital* itself, in a further development aspect, as subject of the movement just described, which it, itself, is as its own valorisation process [*vewertungs prozess*]. In this respect, therefore, every capital is *circulating capital*. In simple circulation, circulation itself appears as the subject [. . .] Capital, however, exists as the subject of circulation; circulation is posited as its own life's course [*Lebenslauf*]. [. . .] Therefore, capital in each of its particular phases is the negation of itself as the subject [*seiner als Subjekt*] of all the various metamorphoses." (*'Grundrisse'* p.620)

Each metamorphosis money capital, productive capital and commodity capital gives it substance. Capital objectifies itself and takes on an objectified form, thus devalorises and denies itself.

"As long as it remains in the production process it is not capable of circulating;. and it is virtually devalorised [*entwertet*]." (*ibid.* p.621)

On the other hand, one must take account of what precedes it. Marx explained that in alternating two capitals, productive and circulating, capital partially surmounts devalorisation. Thus the study of circulation and the mode by which capital overcomes fixation emerges better.

It is then that credit, which allowed production to continue and then to overcome the phase of over- or under-production, becomes the concrete form of the runaway of capital and its autonomisation. Capital in the credit form is *capital in process*.

"The independence of labour time is thereby negated, and the production process is itself posited as determined by exchange . . ." (*ibid.* p.628)

Labour time having been negated, the law of value cannot act as before. That reverberates through the immediate production process.

"In both cases, circulation time is of interest only in so far as it is the suspension [*Aufhebung*], the negation of alien labour time; either because it interrupts capital in the process of its appropriation; or because it forces it to consume a part of the created value, to consume it in order to accomplish the operations of circulation, i.e., to posit itself as capital." (*ibid.* p.634)

Capital thus dominates circulation and will have to do the same simultaneously with the social movement. Here Marx affords another determination of the anthropomorphosis in capital. He considered it as being which would be a huge worker.

"Capital itself as *in process*—hence, as accomplishing [*zurücklegend*] one turnover—is regarded as *working capital*, and the fruits, which it is supposed to yield, are calculated according to its working time—the total circulation time of one turnover. The mystification which thereby takes place lies in the nature of capital." (*ibid.* p.640)

We have recalled a section of Marx's work which is little known, on the subject of the autonomisation of capital and circulation. The other aspect, concerning the production process, has often been demonstrated (cf. Series I number 2).

Let us recall that when one moves from surplus value to profit, capital really enters into relation with itself: capital is at once subject and object (cf. Hegel and *'The Phenomenology of the Mind'*)[1]. It doubles itself up in the relation to itself. Marx said, concerning interest bearing capital, that

one has a contentless and an aconceptual form [*begriffslose*] and, when he thus defines the form of interest bearing capital, he reassumes the comparison with the automaton which he had made in the chapter 'The general formula for capital' in volume I. Marx wrote:

> "In M - C - M′ an immediate link is still retained. In M - M′ we have the incomprehensible form of capital, the most extreme inversion and materialisation of production relations." (*'Theories of Surplus Value'* Vol.III p.462)

He adds that it is an irrational expression showing the complete derangement [*Verrucktheit*] of capital (*'Theories of Surplus Value'* III, p.456), but he adds:

> "It is therefore especially in this form that capital is imagined. It is capital *par excellence*" (*ibid.* p.455)

We have only carried out one of Marx's researches, the essential elements from the whole of *'Capital'* used to show the essential elements, in stating that capital is merely representation. Let us recall what we simply noted in Series II number 3 p.29 (b); that with interest bearing capital all memory of the relation with the production process disappears, whereas it continues, however obscured, at the stage of profit bearing capital (*op. cit.* p.454-5 and p.487). Therefore there would be a sort of dissolution of capital.

> "In the final state [*Gestalt*] in which profit, assumed as something given, appears in capitalist production, the innumerable transformations and intervening stages through which it passes are obliterated and unrecognisable, and consequently the nature of capital is unrecognisable." (*ibid.* p.486)

Now profit must be presupposed so that interest bearing capital can exist.

Having posed this, Marx thus acknowledges the reality of the capital automaton, but he saw its limits in its dependence on the production process. This passage from Chapter 24, 'Externalisation of the Relations of Capital in the form of Interest-Bearing Capital' of *'Capital'* Volume III well indicates his thought. (*'Capital'* III p.399):

> "Now, the concept of capital as a fetish reaches it height in interest-bearing capital, being a conception which attributes to the accumulated product of labour, and at that in the fixed form of money, the inherent secret power, as an automaton, of creating surplus value in geometrical progression, so that the accumulated product of labour, as the *Economist* thinks, has long discounted all the wealth of the world for all time as belonging to it and rightfully coming to it. The product of past labour, the past labour itself, is here pregnant in itself with a portion of present or future (see *'Theories of Surplus Value'* III, p.456, where Marx compared capital with a Moloch) living surplus labour. We know, however, that in reality the preservation, and to that extent also the reproduction of the value of products of past labour is *only* the result of their contact with living labour; and secondly, that the domination of the products of past labour over living surplus labour lasts only as long as the relations of capital, which rests on those particular social relations in which past labour independently and overwhelmingly dominates over living labour."

Capital cannot liberate itself from the production process where human labour is determinant. That is what Marx states in saying that the limit of the rate of interest is not quantitative but qualitative because it depends on the rate of profit. Hence the polemic with Price, whom he reproaches for considering capital as an automaton, while he himself used this comparison. In the final analysis, this form of capital was profoundly irrational for Marx, it could not develop freely. Strangely enough, Marx here took the same position as Aristotle. Aristotle distinguished the economy, the art of acquiring wealth, from chrematistic, or the acquisition of money, as if the former were natural and the latter against nature, (as Marx himself recalled in the note on Aristotle in *Capital*' I, Swan Sonnenschein 1887, p.143 fn.1). Aristotle noted a certain irrationality, but it would only be so because it did not have a 'determined boundary' and that it appeared to be a creation from nothing. All reflection on economic activity, conceived of in the larger sense, is crossed by this division between a natural activity, since it must allow people to regain products, as well as good management and mad activity, which has no end in itself, which, from the start, poses itself as a runaway, the acquisition of wealth as such by commerce, usury, speculation etc.

Prophets and philosophers have condemned the latter, the socialist reformers wanted to eliminate it because it perverted the free development of the law of value; either they could not conceive the autonomisation of this activity, or they wanted to limit it. Marx himself thought that capital in the form of interest bearing capital (i.e. its irrational form) could not gain autonomy because it definitely depended on the production process, even if, at the time of the manifestation of this form of capital, all remembrance of the link with the latter had disappeared. Nevertheless there was another essential element in Marx which distinguished him from the other theoreticians, which shows that injustice, i.e. exploitation, will continue as long as the law of value is respected, i.e. that even inside the economy there was an act against nature and that it was there that the real basis of chrematistic is to be found. The expropriation of surplus value cannot be justified from a human point of view, this being Marx's leitmotiv: to show that the various authors were only opposing the results of the evil and not the evil itself, when it was in question. (They wanted, he said, capital without interest.) The common point between him and them is the belief that this form of capital could not achieve autonomy, that it could still be dominated by humans. But capital has succeeded in breaking with its dependence on the production process and thus on humans, not as the adversaries of Marx were able to conceive of it (such as Price), but because it has become representation.

And, as we have shown above, Marx reached it. He arrived here as far as noting this mode of capital's existence. In Series I number 2, I cited passages from the *'Theories of Surplus Value'* where Marx said that capital becomes a reified form which has swallowed the social relation and, thus, all remembrance of the production process has disappeared. Capital is henceforth what it was in its antidiluvian form of merchant capital, which had a precarious existence (confiscation of goods, murder of usurers, etc.). If interest bearing capital is the highest form of capital, one is led to believe that this form tends to affirm itself very early, well before the

CMP emerges. But in avoiding human activity it could not really develop itself because men remained marginal or even antagonistic. It must conquer in order to triumph and, from inside, shape the power of humanity to its requirements. Historical evidence shows that from the oldest antiquity (Sumer) and even in areas where the CMP penetrated later with great difficulty (China), there was the appearance of elements that could be called capitalist, but it would be absurd to talk of capitalism and capitalists. It is here that Marx's periodisation into formal and real domination of capital is fundamental, but one immediately realises that this periodisation is not historically rigorous. The elements could emerge very early since the phenomenon of the autonomisation of exchange value, and thus the genesis of capital, or, more exactly, its presupposition, can arise from the destruction of the communities. Capital was possible in the money form, but capital can only become effective under certain conditions which we shall not deal with again. We want to underline another aspect of the question.

Given the unity science-capital operating inside the production process, then in circulation, the interest bearing form of capital becomes socially rational and no longer irrational, as Marx had thought. He saw an alienation of capital there, as if it lost its progressive and civilising aspects (which he frequently stressed) in taking this form. (2) Some *epigoni* stated that financial capital is the last form, parasitic form, of capital and begin to theorise a decadence (one must note that again this could appear as such as far as financial capital could still exist for men, i.e. one still had to deal with small owners). But that is really the root of the theoretical inability to grasp this capital. One must not try to understand capital by means of one of its forms, but by means of its totality, its full structure, by means of its realised material community. Then it is possible to grasp how the arrival at a given form modifies the totality of capital. Concerning interest bearing capital, its role is essential because it is with this form that capital, according to Marx, achieves totality. But he posed it with an essential modification; the moment that it creates its own representation, no more dependence on gold, more especially *vis-à-vis* all human representation, but also no more dependence on materiality such as expressed in the organic composition of capital. In fact, this representation only operates from when humans internalise capital and make capital their representation, the mediation between humans and whatever reality is capital, and this in its initial dynamic, expressed in the general formula of capital:— $C \rightarrow C + \Delta C$. To believe that the dogma of the creation from nothing would be generalised and thus profaned. In fact it would state the extreme interaction of humans, for all extra activity of one of us has to encounter the capitalising effects of others. But what remains profoundly true in Marx's study is that from then on all memory of human activity disappears. We are only the activity of capital.

The irrationality of yesterday is today's rationality. All that was human becomes irrational. To demand a life centred on man and woman, on the regeneration of nature, the reconciliation with it, only shows a dementia. The debate about pollution and the limits to development show this clearly.

Expressed otherwise, how can interest bearing capital influence the whole of the process? If capital is more or less autonomised, how does the

real process occur and the process originating in nothing? Speculation correctly shows that there is a discrepancy and shows that capital is not a representation for everyone. For there are two alternatives: either generalised speculation or domination of a representation, implying the programming of humans. At the moment we are in an intermediary period (monetary crisis and the gold problem are proof).

Will capital be able to keep together its different moments that tend to autonomise? It seems to undergo the same process as humans do, separation and division . . .

It is this particular moment of the life of capital which provokes an exacerbated flowering of the right since conflicts take place in the field of property, of this or that portion of capital, on the validity of such a speculation, on the means for realising such a deal etc. Cheats and decent men need rights based on capital's development. But cannot this development do without the relic of the human mode of life (it dominates in borrowing the elements from a society where men were determining)?

Finally, if capital totally liberates itself, what can it end up as if not the acceptance-representation we have in our heads? There is some sort of dissolution of capital, but also its greatest power, which poses the necessity of taking up all that capital can really be, all that men invest, consciously or not, in capitalist society. The ideas that they construct have a great importance and not only because they risk being tautologies in relation to reality itself. In fact, this dissolution of capital is also that of the species internal 'project', at least for a certain period, to reach autonomy, liberation and even absolute liberty [3]. But having removed all materiality and having subjected humans to its own being, can capital still survive? Is this not a progression into the absurd, but an impossible development? This is thus an end to capital, but also that of the species and thus nature. This must be posed first, before capital can achieve this complete autonomisation. Put another way, one cannot and must not go to the end of this project.

Liberation-Emancipation: doublet of wandering

The various studies of capital that we have made, based on Marx, show that its development is the development of emancipation. It had to free itself from the old social relations and the old representations. Three elements are to be envisaged simultaneously: separation, autonomisation and abstraction.

Capital in its antidiluvian form emerged by autonomising itself from the circulation relation, this being found in the form that capital took in the mercantile epoch, the moment that Marx called in the *'Grundrisse'* the third function of money.

> "Capital comes initially from circulation, and, moreover, its point of departure is money. . . . It is at the same time the first concept of capital." (p.253)

But, as Marx said in the *'Unpublished Sixth Chapter of "Capital"'* (appendix to *'Capital'*, Harmondsworth 1976, p.1019), that could only be a formal domination because there was no domination of the production process. For a real emergence of capital there had to be separation of the

worker from his means of production. This is also what Marx called the first concept of capital in *'Capital'* I. There is the starting point of the creation of the production process of capital and its real domination in production, then in society. This development has stages of different moments when capital has to overcome barriers and liberate and autonomise itself and, each time, there is a division, up that that studied by Marx, (it was not the last) between capitalists and capital. I shall not go through this again as it is dealt with in Series I number 2. What preoccupied me is noting what is the fundamental importance of the liberation—emancipation—separation. Capital liberates itself from man and nature, or, in other terms, men separate and liberate themselves from nature by means of capital. They throw off all animalism thanks to it (cf. Moscovici [c]). Men become abstract and they are so in all their natural historical determinations (meaning that during history, i.e. time lived by men in their diversity, that they have lost their different determinations).

Two historical remarks here.

To what extend is this future not the *Verweltlichung* (secularisation), the profanisation-making worldly christian religion which poses a liberating future in relation to nature, and a redemption? The critique of this religion would also be the critique of capital.

One could ascertain that the bourgeois liberation movement is not really put at issue by the proletarian movement, that there is a continuity between the two.

Basically for Marx, the bourgeoisie would not be able to complete this movement (which is probably true) and otherwise he thought that the CMP (thus the bourgeoisie, because he always thought in class terms) would not be able to reconstitute a unity, a community. This class having a destructive role (here destruction = revolution), the role of the proletariat is to achieve this destruction in negating itself. Another human community could be produced from that and Marx gave outlines of it in the *'Manuscripts of 1844'* in the form of the aspiration for another human community, another human being. But we have seen that capital constituted a material community, so we have to start again from scratch, i.e. we must consider the liberation-emancipation movement.

One could especially evidence the process of separation, which is effectively a movement of liberation, so long as this last point had not been seen. One must be separated from what chains us down. Against the 'chains of slavery', the bourgeoisie proposed liberty, the development of the individual and democracy. Marx opposed this liberal society with the necessity of emancipation, liberation, i.e. a movement that would be able to bring about a phenomenon beginning with separation and which, by itself, could be defined neither as good nor as bad; only its conclusion would definitely be able to couple it with a qualification.

They were on the ground of the bourgeois revolution. They had to finish it off, one had to accomplish what it could not bring about: the emancipation of the proletarians and thus that of humanity. Marx nevertheless posed that such an emancipation could only be a negation of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie had freed the productive forces as it had liberated the state and individuals. But such a liberation was not real because it was only for a single class, the bourgeoisie, and besides, it only occurred in

the political sphere and not in the totality.

The problematic is rediscovered when one asserts that the revolution consists solely of the liberation of communism, a prisoner inside the CMP. It would consist in destroying an oppressive form and thus liberating a content. So there would be an inversion of the phenomenon which we shall point out later, since here the revolutionaries would tend to act like the men of the right. Nevertheless there is some truth in this theorisation. Capital indeed is a form that always inflates itself on an alien content (recuperation). The moment comes, as happens in all revolutions, when there is a rupture, and everything collapses. Any event can be determinant of the rupture. But this cannot be the point of departure for another mode of life except if men and women gain another representation, if they place themselves outside the old society. For in capital's case, the struggle can be recuperated after a longer or shorter period of troubles.

We do not have to set communism free since it implies an immense act of creation for its realisation. The communist movement as an opposition, recuperated by capital, can provoke the necessary disequilibrium, but it cannot throw the dynamic of a new life into action. Moreover, this problematic tends to give credence to communism being possible only on the basis of the CMP. But the huge movement away from capital is only realisable if human beings rediscover the many potentialities in their past that they have been deprived of (thus remembering them).

Liberation is almost always presented as a form along with a loss of content. In fact the emancipating subject must disappear in its immediate being by maintaining the invariant fact, but, because the weight of the content, a separation between content—form and the liberation of the latter occurs, i.e. autonomisation (which poses itself, in germ, the dissolution-*Spatlung*, thus schizophrenia). This is at the base of the following phenomenon: the left was for liberation [4] and the right for the defence of the content, its maintenance. This is particularly clear with the various religions. They would only continue because they preserve something human, a substance from another epoch. Religion is perhaps only possible because the person lost itself.

One also understands there the ambiguity of the national and popular liberation movements, being simultaneously reactionary and revolutionary, according to the old conception. One can see that in the anti-colonial movement and especially in some of the analyses of Franz Fanon on Algeria. But that is also true for the actions of the romantics and Hegel as well as for the partisans of folklore.

Thus the mechanism of alienation is not destroyed with liberation because it can be the opening into a still greater loss, a loss of all rootedness, the loss of any deep link with the past, with the land etc. . . . ending in emptiness, the loss of referents, without the possibility of forseeing a new mode of existence. . . For if only a liberation movement is sought, an indefinite is also posed and it is similar to the movement of enjoyment; on the one hand one must place that in parallel with the liberation of work, its abolition. We have said that this is a capitalist slogan because it finally aims at making human beings superfluous: living capital with all its inorganic bodies created over the centuries. Likewise, we have said that one must also consider the destruction of work. Put otherwise, we have

stated that we must approach the question by means of other presuppositions. The movement, the dynamic of the realisation of the human community, must place itself outside. To do this we must rethink the whole past movement:

1. Relation between the different human species before the triumph of *Homo sapiens*.
2. Relations between different human communities, their dissolution.
3. What occurs then?
4. What have we come to?
5. What have we lost? And also what could have occurred which was latent and was always inhibited.
6. It is insufficient to say that we must unite an emancipated form with a lost content, for there is also an act of creation. This is felt when one sees that the human species has been horribly destructive, violent and aggressive and that a species in harmony with nature is needed.

Let us now return to Marx. The following citations are from *'On the Jewish question'* (Marx/Engels *'Collected Works'* Vol.III, London 1975).

> "The limits of political emancipation are evident at once from the fact that the *state* can free itself from a restriction without man being *really* free from this restriction, that the state can be a *free state* without man being a *free man*." (p.152)

> "Man emancipates himself *politically* from religion by banishing it from the sphere of public law to that of private law. Religion is no longer the spirit of the *state*, in which man behaves—although in a limited way, in a particular form, and in a particular sphere—as a species-being, in community with other men. Religion has become the spirit of *civil society*, of the sphere of egoism, of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. It is no longer the essence of *community*, but the essence of *difference*. It has become the expression of man's *separation* from his *community*, from himself and from other men—as it was *originally*. It is only the abstract avowal of specific perversity, *private whimsy*, and arbitrariness. The endless fragmentation of religion in North America, for example, gives it even *externally* the form of a purely individual affair. It has been thrust among the multitude of private interests and ejected from the community as such. But one should be under no illusion about the limits of political emancipation. The division of the human being into a *public man* and a *private man*, the *displacement* of religion from the state into civil society, this is not a stage of political emancipation but its *completion* this emancipation therefore neither abolishes the *real* religiousness of man, nor strives to do so." (p.155)

It is a pity that Marx did not define religiousness, but, besides, there is more, he had protestantism in mind. But catholicism persisted and it exists by maintaining a community. Certainly religion shows that the community was lost, but it is also religion that maintains and continues the given community spirit, especially with religions like christianity, Islam and Judaism. In *Contribution to the critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Law"* (*'Collected Works'* Vol. III) he said: (p.175)

> "Religion is the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again."

Marx shows well that religion is a feeling (more than a consciousness) of something I call lost, but it is also the formation of another community. Now, it can be an alternative to capital, limited certainly, but operative. It is true that in accomplishing its different modernisations (*agiornamenti*) the church destroys itself, it tends to lose progresively the memory of what had been lost.

> "Political emancipation is at the same time the *dissolution* of the old society on which the state alienated from the people, the sovereign power, is based. Political revolution is a revolution of civil society." (*'On the Jewish Question' op. cit.* p.165)
>
> "Only when the real, individual man readsorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a species being in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognised and organised his "*forces propres*" as *social* forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished." (*ibid.* p.168)

One could cite the passage where Marx said that man is not emancipated from religion, but that there has been an emancipation of religion etc. . . .

That is very much the node of the question since political emancipation ends in the formation on one side of the individual and, on the other, institutions; social emancipation finally pulverises the individual (the emancipatory movement affects his own being; sexual emancipation is the autonomisation of sex) and the formation of the material community of capital. Political emancipation creates bourgeois society, social emancipation creates the material community of capital, the despotism of it with full democracy and generalised slavery (a profound convergence here between the AMP and CMP).

One can also establish the limits to christianity in the western area. There has been emancipation, but the destruction of paganism and the enthrallment of the body, the beginning of the absurd binarity body/spirit, soul/matter etc. . . . Destruction of communities. But also the limits of marxism.

There is the unification of the species in the historical as well as the present spatial totality and this species can only operate through rethinking its role in the cosmos. This also is, certainly, a unification with christianity, also it was posed by marxism, but it had to be carried out through struggles between human factions. Thus one must get rid of the sort of project supporting both as the enlightenment (*Aufklärung*), one must pose at the same time the determinations conserved by the right and those founded on the left. But this is to be done without hiding the fundamental phenomenon; the movements of the right have wanted to conserve, but in order to maintain a domination. They have always maintained a human nature in spite of their inhumanity, while all the movements that one might claim to be left have come to strike against this terrible inhumanity. The right wing has always maintained a human dimension despite their lack of humanity while all the so-called left movements crashed into this terrible inhumanity. The right wing maintained what could be human for some elites, which, by itself, denatures their human 'project'. This inhumanity

is crystallised in discipline, state and various institutions. Thus to reject the theory of the proletariat does not at all imply the denial of the revolutionary, human role, but delimited in space and time, of the proletarians who nobly rise up against capital's domination. But we do not propose a reconciliation which would come down to Bakunin's famous proposition of reconciling classes. We wish to expose the false consciousness as much on one side as on the other, the error of somehow shooting wide. One has to abolish the cult of the past as well as its iconoclasm to show that to smash despotism one tended not only to create another (cf. the despotism of equality), but above all, human determinations were destroyed.

Let us give a precise case, science developed by denying and rejecting magic and the different occult sciences, astrology, divining, palmistry etc., without mentioning the sciences preoccupied with parapsychology etc. It is impossible that the dynamic tending to communism, which is developing more and more, could really engage gear without one looking at those last sciences, that a new perspective arises there and from the confrontation with official science. This is only developed in eliminating the problems which are called false but which, paradoxically, it must combat now (e.g. study of telepathy and telekinesis in the USSR and USA).

Thanks to May-June 1968 and the subsequent movement, many people liberated themselves from militantism, the prolecult, theory, the relation to society; thus the liberation of individuals (conception of their primacy), no more sacrifice etc. But one had empty beings that bloated themselves on whatever, who were free from reference but incapable of asserting themselves and to draw on all the resources of life (of the domination of death) from the vast human and natural movement. Hence the negative aspects of the counter-culture, especially concerning drugs. On this subject, it is interesting to note the liaison opposition between autonomisation-inhibition and liberation-alienation.

For example, concerning love, one has the liberation of one function. In fact, the destruction of the family, which simultaneously implies the liberation of love as a uniting function, reunites humans either for procreation or to maintain a certain cohesion of the human milieu. At the same time, that gives rise to an illusion that an inhibition repression had been destroyed. Given that it is only of a function, young men and women who had beaten this decomposition could easily play their role as procreating citizens later.

Finally, liberation and autonomisation are linked and are the movements of the reduction of human beings because they are fundamentally the loss of the *Gemeinwesen*. Marx had already shown that in *'On the Jewish Question'* because each time there is the emprisonment of the human being in a piecemeal fashion and the loss of universal thought, which is a mere pale reflection of its dimension of the *Gemeinwesen.* One generally states an illusion of accessions to a participation—an activity to break passivity and dependence—without questioning as to what humans autonomise themselves, which is finally the autonomisation function. Being will manage the free area, its being there determined by the function which is really posed as autonomised (self-management).

The illusion is very great with those who, in thinking that they have superceded Marx, say that the economy is no longer determinant, if it ever

was, they add, i.e., only the struggle counts, that man is always there in fact, present in the social and economic frame and in everyday acts and facts etc., and that there would always be an immediate and continuous possibility of emancipation, which occurs with self-management. Now, participation is superfluous as the human being is *Gemeinwesen*; otherwise it would be to participate with oneself; the universal dimension enables him to cover the world. That is why all those who have overlooked the determination of the *Gemeinwesen* have always needed a general equivalent, a reference, stabiliser-coordinator etc., for in each case they always have the business of the individuals, and they imply a state.

Emancipation, Crisis and Critique

It is not enough to reject the perspective of emancipation-liberation. One has equally to question the concepts of crisis and critique. The crisis postulates a choice, a decision, and thus enforces itself because there is a difficult and unusual situation. This is true both for the CMP and for humans, without forgetting the interference between the two. So what choices are possible? One can already indicate that for the CMP there is the question of the choice between material and immaterial (relation to zero growth) production, but this is, in fact, the problem of accession to absolute domination and the choices are only apparent. There is a rigorous determinism that leads to a certain realisation, a determinism that can only be ut in question again if humans become capable of breaking their domestication. The choice for men appears as the acceptance of its destructive multiplication of life or the domination = restriction of its inhuman quantitative multiplication which would allow its continuance. To abandon a certain fear of death which forces it to look for life in the extension of life, multiplication and progression of life. Reproduction is a certain fear of death and man lives it in its extension and not in the intensity of living; that translates the uncertainty in the world as if the species was not yet sure of its existence on the planet. The intensity of living implies a reflection of life on itself, then there is enjoyment by the resorption of life inside the living subject and not delegated to another generation.

The concept of critique is linked to the crisis, the former allowing one to find the most favourable choice and, besides, there is a close link between the two. The critical situation (period) is a situation of crisis. Literary or artistic criticism comes into this case. On the other hand, critique in the philosophical sense enables one to found and autonomise a field of study, something, a form, which establishes the beginning of a process, e.g. with Kant, but also with Marx (concerning political economy). (What are the conditions for a real development of the productive forces?) Here the critique is the propaedeutic for science. But since we have to judge correctly, there is supporting all that the concept of value and a scale of values. Besides, one must make one choice triumph over the other possible ones and that generally happens against other men, hence critique engenders the polemic, all the more if the point is to frame one's work on the critique of another's. An interesting example is Baudrillard's work. He works simultaneously like Kant and Marx in trying to establish a new field and acts like all polemicists, he has to kill his father, hence his *'Contribution to the critique of the political economy of the sign'*, which cannot be

a supercession of Marx in any case (not even a start) because it does not question Marx's presuppositions at all.

When does the critique arise? Briefly, leaving out all classical literature, where there are rather recipes and precepts for writing and speaking well, one can say that it began with the rising bourgeoisie, at the dawn of the CMP. One can always define critique as a means of access to a science, a search for a method to do things well but mainly for a science which sets itself up on what is produced at the same time as delimiting this science. The critique grew in amplitude after the end of the eighteenth century, i.e. after Kant, the philosopher who possibly the most posed (at any rate he was the first to do so) the conditions for science, its limits etc. The route to science is certainly the critique. It is not wrong to see the critique and epistemology as neighbours, the Althusser school tries to set up a science of critique and to separate it, as they always put it, from ideology.

Thus the critique appeared from the start as a discipline that was there to dictate good taste and to maintain the rules of good usage, conventions . . . (relation between the critique and the state!)

From that one has wanted to know why an author produced this more than that, one has wanted to study his conditioning . . .

Before the critique was part of the whole (once the whole was philosophy) it was included in aesthetics, cf. Hegel. Later it was separated, now it must be subject to autonomisation in becoming a science. The work of the marxists and the structuralists (at times there is little difference between them) is located there, to accomplish this reduction.

The critique has an undeniable link with competition and so with publicity. Evidently with the inflation of words there emerges a need to choose, not by itself, but by the intermediary of a third which is the mediator between me and the works and will lead me to the good works. It is interesting to look at censorship here, not at direct censorship, that is, with cutting out, one cuts in the body of the work, but that which finally cuts in the body of my being in cutting my potential link with certain works, because they are criticised, doubted, questioned; and discredit is a slope that is easier to descend than credit is to climb.

Publicity is the positivised externalisation of the critique. It only gives favourable and positive judgements, valuing while implicitly devaluing all competitors. Human being is again dispossessed, skinned. Publicity has a great role on the level of all rackets.

All these elements allow us to found the rejection of the concepts of crisis and critique . . .

To return to the present crisis, seen as a crisis of society, crisis of the CMP, some say, of capital. We can accept a diagnosis, we live in a period ripe of overthrowals which have already made themselves felt. We can say that we live in a period similar to the 20's, a period when many thought that the revolution was already underway, that it was possible, indeed inevitable, while in fact their action allowed the creation of the material community of capital. They operated in the development of its real domination. Now it is a period when capital can come to dominate even more, the CMP really tends to surmount the difficulties left by the old institutions and old representations. Thus there is a tendency towards a unification, by means of multinationals and the UN, positively to found the

community of capital which will probably only realise itself in conflicts when the left and the ultra-left will think that they are working for the revolution whereas they will be mere toys of capital, e.g. struggles against the states, demand for free goods . . .

Numerous misfirings are inevitable during this vast process which is already underway, creating the possibility for many interventions. But this can only be realised and have any chance of success as such if the old representations which hold down men are eliminated. It is only from that that there can be a flowering of communication between humans because they are no longer congealed in stereotypes, fixed modes of being. For, if it is evident that without a profound shakeup affecting the famous 'material base', nothing is possible. It is also clear that without the total rejection of those representations, human beings will not be able to begin another dynamic. Besides, the revolution is only possible if the great majority of individuals begin to autonomise themselves from their material conditions (what is called gaining consciousness). From this viewpoint, the Dutch school, especially Pannekoek, had the merit of insisting on this necessary transformation during the revolution.

Before a powerful shock is produced, a union of revolutionaries must be about to be realised, there must be a manifestation of a new solidarity just as a new sensibility, but especially a new representation is needed. If not, the shock will merely give rise to a blind violence incapable of emerging in the affirmation of another mode of life.

Thus if one accepts the word crisis to describe the present situation, it is important to underline that what is important is not the crisis but the fact of knowing if men always approach it according to the same schemes. That does not mean that one must comply with the theory according to which one must above all change mentalities. One sees only too well that these are not changed by the intellectual or collective (partial, non-total) interventions of whatever specialist in agitation. But it is clear that a given development of a determined society does not lead automatically to a revolutionary spirit. One must therefore grapple with the present crisis in its particularity and in the modes that it is to be understood. The largest element of the crisis will be (it is already so feebly) a human behaviour altogether different and non-domesticated, i.e. not asphyxiated by rationality. Now our world is dominated, conquered by historical materialism; progress is conceived of as the development of the productive forces. Even those who do not profess this theory are impregnated by it. For them it is like a minimum point of reference with reality, for them it would always be true in the material sphere, but on no account for the totality. One must then break with this rationality and with the world that it controls.

Crisis and actors of the drama

I shall not give the facts for, for want of a better term, crisis, in a phenomenological fashion. Henceforth the moment of breaking and instability inside the CMP, which Bordiga foresaw for 1975, is clear to all. Thus G. Barraclough wrote in the *'New York Tribune'*

> "We live at the end of a fifty year long epoch, the epoch of neo-capitalism. We are beginning a period of radical readjustments which will inevitably bring evil and suffering (. . .) There is no solution inside

the system."

One can now await the violent clashes inside and between the various nations in a short time. A review of actors in this drama which is beginning imposes itself (outside capital itself, which I shall try to situate in a forthcoming article, what can be the moment of its great impasse and weakness).

We can immediately indicate the supporters of the CMP, the economists and politicians. Here, especially with the first, there is an inability to understand the crisis concomitant with the illusion of still being determinant. One can ask oneself the question of knowing if they will not rebel too, the rationality of capital commanding everything. This is especially true for engineers and managers. There are also the reformers of capital like Mansholt, Attali and the Club of Rome [d] and, to a very different extent, Illich (Domenach to the extent that he takes up Illich's problematic). Besides, since he does not question the capitalist presuppositions, MacLuhan too.

Let us note the churches. Their role is particular. On one hand they have to oppose capital in as much as this destroys everything human. In that sense they are a human dimension because they tend to maintain something that is lost, even if it can only persist in the state of memory. On the other hand, they defend the representations in total opposition to the necessary future of the species, e.g. the famous 'go forth and multiply', (see the MIT critique).

It is the same with their ambiguous contradictions on the problem of life, and on the question of abortion. However, the aim is to try to reduce the human population. The currents issuing from marxism do not question at all the dynamic of the increase of the productive forces, CPs, SPs, various leftists.

The ecological movement and its often lamentable limits in this world, as in France (cf. the miserable end of Dumont during the electoral carnival). The positions of *'La Gueule Ouverte'* [e] are often encouraging (most often on the level of information) but are limited because they do not really question capital's presuppositions. It is the same with the commune movement. It is important to analyse the positions of movements defending vegetarianism, e.g. *'La Vie Claire'* [*f*], in relation to that, or the movement of organic agriculture.

One does not develop illusions in them because they see only part of the problem and, most often, are enclosed in the mercantile mechanism, but they still express a certain resistance to capital's dynamic. To the extent that they can enable a certain number of humans to live more naturally (perhaps as the point of departure for questioning domestication), they can unleash a process which will largely supercede them, especially when there is a questioning of official science, as with the members of the league against vaccinations. There are similar elements in the ecological communes believing in a soft technology and, one can note, the importance of the hippie and Yippie movements (which shows the importance of various movements of contestation of young people). Finally, the regionalists tend to bring out again certain important elements such as the defence of nature, organic agriculture (without speaking of a questioning of the central, despotic state), and, in seeking to define a human

dimension perceived in the differences, the necessary diversity inside the species, they form a possible starting point for a more global questioning. But one must not forget their duality, their datedness above all.

There are the marginal groups (which have considerable internal differences) outside these currents, deviating from the present society, from the parasitic marginals up to the more or less ascetic marginals, a kind of twentieth century Anchorite. On this subject the kinship between monarchism and marginality must be underlined. The institutionalised monkish movement was a means of recuperating marginality. There is a certain resemblance to the end of the Roman Empire. Also with a certain asceticism there is a search for a new food, the renewal of the practice of fasting. Sometimes the movement is content to return to the sources, sometimes it explores new ways. There one gets to the root of the phenomenon, not at the negation of capital, which is insufficient, but more especially of that of the escape from its hold. In fact, the essential movements of the discontinuity of humanity are those where it has achieved a new sexuality (new sexual relations) and a new food with a certain conception of this food as a relation between men and women. This must be seen together with the fact that food and sexuality are profoundly linked and determine human behaviour, the behaviour of humans in nature [5]. There is a third element that one must consider: death. The dynamic to communism cannot be really set in motion without the participants acquiring a new representation—conception of death. There again is the parallel with the end of the ancient world; the opposition of the pagan and christian representation of death.

Thus we find the biological dimension to the revolution differently. Reproduction, nutrition and death are all essential elements (somehow basic) of life. It is a question not only of the life of the human species, but of other species; limitation of human reproduction and of preying on other species. We must point out that capital can realise the dream of so-called non-violent man in a monstrous manner, taking into account the quasi-sacred character of all forms of life, replacing organic food by synthetic chemical food. From the moment when one feeds humans on pills, the question of killing animals is no longer posed, but such feeding is probably neither possible nor necessary (i.e. that the possibility here is introduced by a necessity) only following the destruction of living creatures, animal and vegetable.

What we have said so far has not been a critique but a simple statement of fact. It is not inside the various modes of being, for or against capital, that one will be able to find the true solution allowing us to inflect the crisis of the CMP into a revolutionary crisis. More especially as the crisis is not an exceptional movement during which a revolutionary possibility is finally unveiled, because it can be fundamentally the moment when a greater subjugation of men and women to the CMP is effected.

We must leave this world

We must abandon this world dominated by capital which has become a spectacle of beings and things. A spectacle in the sense that Pic de la Mirandole meant when he said that man was the spectacle of the world and its mirror as well [6]. In fact man would have no special gift, all talents

being distributed to all living creatures, man, who came last, would be left totally unprovided. Luckily God had pity on him and gave him some qualities of all the creatures and thus he became the spectacle of the world. In him all living creatures could somehow recognise themselves and see themselves act. As a result of the process of anthropomorphosis, capital becomes in turn a spectacle. It assimilates to itself and incorporates in itself all the qualities of men, all their activities, without ever being one of them, otherwise it would deny itself by substantialisation, inhibition of its life process.

In accepting this representation of capital, men see a spectacle which is their mutilated redundancy because in general they only perceive one part. They have long since lost the meaning of totality.

One must reject the presuppositions of capital, which immerse in a distant past, to escape the grip of capital (moment of the dissolution of the primitive communities) and, simultaneously, one can supercede Marx's work which is the finished expression of the arrival at totality, the accomplished structure of value, which, with its mutation of capital, has set itself up as the material community. One must envisage a new dynamic, for the CMP will not disappear following a frontal struggle of people against their present domination, but by a huge renunciation which implies the rejection of a path used for millenia. The CMP does not decay but has a downfall.

Jacques Camatte (August 1974)

Footnotes

[1] Lukacs said in *'History and Class Consciousness'* that the proletariat must become subject and object of history in acquiring class consciousness. He thus claimed for the proletariat what capital has realised, so showing that capital could very well develop from its value pole or its labour (proletarian) pole. Some years later Castoriadis, then Cardan, and later Potere Operaio took up the same theorisation in another form and contributed by this to the discourse of capital.

[2] Marx praises productive capital in all his work (i.e. the P - P′ cycle) because the development of mechanism and science is linked to it, but he condemns interest bearing capital, which is unjustifiable in any manner in the field of the development of the productive forces. It would seem to him that capital ceases to be progressive-progressing when interest bearing capital tends to dominate the total process of capital. The Nazis and many after them had a similar position: defence of productive capital and an attack on the so-called financial capital, usury etc., in as much as this was international. Hence also the worship of the proletarian as productive worker. Thus they had realised the reformist part of Marx's work, not the whole work and especially not its revolutionary dimension. For him, the proletariat had to be suppressed along with the CMP so that there could be a real development of the productive forces for man.

[3] The power of this idea of autonomisation, of gaining independence, must be sought for in the distant past of man. Did he not know a period where he would have been profoundly dominated and oppressed by surrounding circumstances?—or one must see it in the profound 'runaway' of the desire to create. Man, it has been shown, is the animal that is the most destructive of nature. Its only specialisation some say would be aggression allowing it to survive. However, the surviving ancient communities show an equilibrium between man and nature where the former does not regard himself as the dominator. That shows that it is fundamental to situate the moment when the representation autonomises in man and when he separates from nature.

[4] One can place the demand for liberation-emancipation in liaison with the discontinuous, while the demand of the content is in relation to the continuous.

Now one poses the question of liberating oneself from the institutions, customs and modes of being, or, otherwise, there would be a problem of liberating oneself from the forms themselves. One should note, on this, the relation with pictorial art which has to free itself from suggestions of nature, then from artistic forms themselves.

[5] In articles in forthcoming issues of *'Invariance'* we shall analyse how oppression-domestication of human beings was affected and is still affected not only by means of sexuality, but also through food. We shall show through Makarius' work how taboos were firstly of food then sexual. There was a moment when food and sexuality were divided and the latter autonomised.

[6] Besides, there is an undeniable link between spectacle and mirror. The spectacle has to show humans what they are, or what they must be. It is a more or less distortting mirror of their immediate being.

Footnotes added to the English translation

[a] The two articles in this number referred to are available in English as *'The Wandering of Humanity'* (Trans. F. Perlman) Black and Red, P.O. Box 9546, Detroit, Michigan 48202, USA.

[b] See the English translation cited above p.34, fn. 20.

[c] Serge Moscovici, author of *'Society against Nature'* and *'Domesticated and Wild Men'* both in French by 10/18, Paris 1972 and 1974.

[d] Sicco Mansholt, author of the EEC 'Mansholt Plan' to reorganise agriculture in a capitalist manner without all the social consequences. Also wrote *'The Crisis'* (1974): Jacques Attali, author of *'Political Models'* (1972), *'Anti-Economics'* (1974) and *'Speech and Tool'* (1975).

[e] *'La Gueule Ouverte'* (*'The gaping gob'*), a magazine dealing with ecology etc.

[f] *'La Vie Claire'* French organisation and magazine against contamination of food etc.

STATEMENTS AND CITATIONS

We have never explained why we dropped what served as a distinction [1], not directly since the problems were never posed in organisational terms, but indirectly. It was indicated what the theory was and we placed ourselves in the field of those who struggle for it in triumph. Thus we wrote "invariance of the theory of the proletariat" because it corresponded with our thought and because we had to say what "invariance" meant to us. Alone, this word could appear very obscure. It contained a delimiting statement, certainly, but which imputed to Marx a position perhaps beyond his thought: that the proletariat had a precise theory.

We also stated elsewhere that the theory referred to was classist, and non-classist. It could not be attributed to the proletariat alone, more especially as it could only be realised by negating itself which implies that the proletariat could really pose its negation and that its theory was the conscious exposé of it. This entails limiting the invariance of theory to very short moments. Thus the statement "invariance of the theory of the proletariat" entered into contradiction with other statements and articles in the journal. Nevertheless, its elimination will take its whole meaning while we have replied exhaustively to the question of what the proletariat really was and what it has become. For the remainder of the statements it is clear that despite our intentions that they have assumed the clear character of a distinction, a delimitation, and we said in '*About organisation* [2] to what extent this is dangerous and insofar that it limits and poses racketism.

Thus this proclamation, a kind of declaration of historical principles, became quite insufficient then completely wrong. It had the merit of situating the point of departure of a reflection that was rapidly superceded.

Our basic concern when we began this publication was to state the continuity inside the discontinuity and reciprocally. That is why we repeated a certain number of quotations. Citing allowed us to say with whom we were in continuity and also to unveil the historical arc in which we thought that we operated. Thus we obviously chose what appeared compatible with our moment of struggle in the work of Marx and Bordiga. Simultaneously we invited the reader to order these works in terms of certain discontinuities we wished to bring out.

The quotations of Bordiga from the '*History of the Communist Left*' [3] aimed at restating his antidemocratism and our agreement with him on this capital point. Besides, it seems essential for us to bring out his antivoluntarism and the appreciation that the revolutionary phase had passed already in 1919. Nevertheless this antidemocratism and anti-parliamentarianism are altogether insufficient today when we need to constitute a new human community and since capital has realised its own material community.

The quotations in the journal besides those in the articles are like windows through which the reader can directly enter the moving field of those who publish this journal. It is a theoretical short cut which often illuminates in its silences more than many developments.

Thus this quotation from Bordiga signifies our desire to establish a work explaining the positive supercession of democracy. This has been partially

realised and above all practically by many people who have gone beyond this stage. We have therefore removed this quotation and another by Bordiga which is found at the end of the only issue of *'Sul filo del tempo'* (May 1953)[4]. There again it is a matter of taking a position in relation to reality and to Bordiga. It was essential to bring out his supercession of emulation, competition, of the individual—genius or not, the personality cult; putting forward the anonymity and the need to retreat from the current social ambiance. There was there too a beginning of the critique of racketism, but Bordiga's formulation let one believe that one had to pass through purgatory to be able to reach the beautiful accomplishment. There was the stink of the theory of the self-sacrificing militant even though he rejected it. Besides, the anonymity has been fully superceded. This is to what capital's development reduces us. Signing an article certainly is no liberation, for to name someone is to define and identify him. Naming and numbering human beings is the necessary means of domination in class society, of the state. We sign to give reference points and because we reject the dictatorship of the theory which would be impersonal in which the various contributions of revolutionaries would be melted down, all difference between them being misunderstood, even rejected, in the name of coherence in the most profound version of this conception, in the name of "doctrinal monolithism". Thus every revolutionary would simply become the simple incarnation of theory. Bordiga's anonymity was directed against the cult of the great men and messiahs, against individualism and bourgeois personalism which were seen as the pathogenic elements that had caused gangrene in the workers' movement. One had to eradicate the evil. This anonymity is linked to a certain guardianship of the theory which had to be transmitted "intact" to future generations and in return this allowed revolutionaries to avoid being absorbed by the ruling ideology.

Anonymity could be useful during the period of counter-revolution, a blocked period when it could have seemed that nothing new was emerging. Its *raison d'être* disappears at once when the revolution unveils its new dimensions. One can no longer be content to defend a theory that has become consciousness of the past, repressive and sunk into wandering.

The revolution will be anonymous because it does not need clever leaders with the necessary counterpart of an ignorant mass, a mass for manoeuvre, organised or not in the party. It will be anonymous only in this negative sense because the communist revolution can only, in fact, develop if the mass of the people have broken with anonymity, i.e. in-expressiveness, the loss of substance to which capital reduces us. The revolution with a human content implies that the slaves of capital break with their slavery of which anonymity is only one expression.

From *'Invariance'* Series I number 8 on we quoted a fragment of Engels' text of 1847, *'The Communists and Karl Heinzen'* [5]. The letter of September 4th 1969 published in series II number 2 (pp. 52-9, translated here as *'About Organisation'*) sufficiently explains why we did so. Let us indicate briefly why it is no longer useful. Communism is, for us, also a millinerian aspiration, a myth, a hope, a faith, all these determinations, which were not produced simultaneously, are not incompatible; they express modes of

being of the species and its development, as well as the many attempts at liberation. There was too close a link between communism and proletariat in Engels, which was conceivable in his time but inadmissible today. Finally, what was said on theory is still valid today. The communist movement showed itself again from 1968 in an ever stronger manner, but with new determinations. Thus one had to quote Engels' phrase as a taking of positions, now one has to live in this movement and also to understand it, thus to recognise its new characteristics.

A quotation from Marx outlined well our pre-May 1968 perspective:

> "Perhaps the revolution will first become possible only after the completion of the counter-revolution." (Speech at the Cologne trial, February 1849)

Now we proclaimed that the revolution was emerging with May 1968. Our foresight in its hypothetical form, interposed with Marx, was realised. There was no longer any need to exhibit it. Before May we had to show how the counter-revolution went to completion. By attentively following its exhaustion, we have been able not to foresee *rigorously* the emergence of the revolution, but to be able to recognise it, even in its modernity.

We are now fully convinced that:

> ". . . this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew." ('*The German Ideology*')

So far the revolution has only been the formation of revolutionaries, not the destruction of the present mode of life which fully confirms what Marx wrote. However he put forward the phenomenon in classist terms which we can no longer accept. It is no longer a case of a class being revolutionary, but humanity as a whole. The state has become society and in the areas of capital's real domination it achieves the enclosure of society resulting in the domestication of men. It is against this domestication that humanity must revolt, thus attacking capital.

This expression well expressed our conception of the revolution. In particular it brought out our anti-voluntarism, our lack of proselytism and our deep conviction that the revolution is a revolutionary process during which and when there was a break inside the society of capital, human beings acquired a consciousness of the overthrow in progress and the tasks to be accomplished. In other words, in this passage Marx immediately eliminated the problematic of consciousness coming from outside and of spontaneity. By definition the revolution cannot occur without a fracture through which, a new feeling etc. all surge. The May movement and the later events all showed the need for a new way of life, a new life. That will be the concern of the next issues of *Invariance*'.

The dropping of these quotes allows the reinforcement of the propensity to irony and facile polemics—there is nothing more variable than '*Invariance*'. We shall be the first to applaud this manifestation of subtlety and demonstration of the capacity to skim the surface. Because, in remaining there, it is not touching the essential, the theory we have posed as invariant is communism. We have realised that one cannot link this closely to the proletariat, that the proletariat is immersed in the whole social body

and that henceforth that the revolution cannot be made in a class' name that one would have to resuscitate, a class which only very rarely succeeds in posing communism in its absolute discontinuity with the CMP. What is invariant is the desire to rediscover the lost community which will not be realised by the recreation of the past but as an act of creation. Simultaneously with this continuous movement, the necessary discontinuity without which communism cannot develop is asserted.

It is no longer a matter of making detours in order to be. Everything published in '*Invariance*' constitutes a presupposition to an affirmation that we wish to found and develop. It is unnecessary to deny this path, to paper it over, likewise simple refutation is sterile. Life is not reduced to polemics but is integration.

One has to avoid the proclamation of the dictatorship of a theory to follow the work undertaken, especially when it is the product of the reduction of an immense work and which can only be by excluding the contribution of a host of people who struggled for human emancipation. We integrate Marx's work (since he especially is concerned) but we do not pose a marxist theory nor our own theory. We affirm a certain theoretical behaviour which presupposes a certain appropriation of given theories, of attitudes in society where we live, where people lived. Living is not submission but reinvention, creation!

April 1973

[1] INVARIANCE of the theory of the proletariat
—defended by the Communist League ('Communist Manifesto' 1848), in the IWMA (work of the London General Council directed by Marx), during the Commune, in the Second International, against it degeneration and failure (German socialist left, Bolsheviks, Italian socialist left: abstentionist fraction).
—triumphed in Russia in 1917 and internationally in Moscow in 1919: foundation of the Third Internationa, Livorno in 1921, break with democracy.
—defended by the communist left against Moscow's degeneration, against the Sacred Alliance in the resistance to fascism.
—which must be restored as well as the communist party, organ of the proletarian class, outside all democratism, carreerism, individualism, against immediatism and all revisionist doubts of doctrine.
—the goal of '*Invariance*' is the re-creation of the communist party.

[2] '*Invariance*' Series II, no.2,

[3] "Salvatori was more voluntarist: it is certain that we have never been. Will cannot make revolutions, nor the party create them. It can and must favour them by its conscious action in opposing the false directions in time, towards which opportunism drags the noble crowd of proletarians in misleading their forces. The party let escape the opportunity afforded by history precisely because it knew that in canalising the flood of proletarians towards the ballot boxes it could avoid the shock of revolutionary inundation. If the proletariat in liberating itself from democratic illusions had burnt its parliamentary boats behind it, the struggle would have ended very differently. The revolutionary party had the duty to attempt this great enterprise in throwing itself across the other. But revolutionary, the party was not." ('*Storia della sinistra comunista*' Vol.1, p.175)

[4] "To follow the continuity of the contribution of our work, readers should not stop at changes in periodical titles due to episodes of a lower type. Our contributions are easily recognised by their indivisable systematic nature. As it is the attribute of the bourgeois world that all commodities bear their maker's name, all ideas are followed by their author's signature, every party is defined by its leader's name, it is clear that we are in our proletarian camp when the method of exposition is concerned with the objective relations of reality, never to stop on the stupid personal advice of contradictors, their commendation or censures in which the judgement is transferred from the content to the good or bad reputation of the exponent, with almost always unjust *matches* between light and heavy weights.

Work such as ours can only succeed by being hard and laborious and unaided by bourgeois publicity techniques, by the vile tendency to admire and adulate men." ('*Sul filo del tempo*'. 1953, p.41)

[5] "Herr Heinzen imagines communism is a certain *doctrine* which proceeds from a definite theoretical principle as its *core* and draws further conclusions from that. Herr Heinzen is very much mistaken. Communism is not a doctrine but a *movement*; it proceeds not from principles but from *facts*. The Communists do not base themselves on this or that philosophy as their point of departure but on the whole course of previous history and specifically its actual results in the civilised countries at the present time. . . . Communism, insofar as it is a theory, is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat in this struggle and the theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat." ('*Collected Works*' Vol.6, pp.303-4)

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2.* Letters 1970-1974. Apocalypse and Revolution (Chs. 1-2) (G. Collu, G. Cesarano).

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Only the issues marked * are still available. All the texts are in Franch, for a list of English translations, see page 2.

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